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RMR

FROM: Habana

TO: Secretary of State

NO. 2268, March 7, noon

PRIORITY

ALUSNA has received message from Navy Department suggesting press release be issued on Navy offers of assistance to GOC in connection with explosion S.S. LA COUBRE. Embassy has no objection to release but believes it more useful if made in Washington.

Facts are as follows: ALUSNA advised Charge 2100 March 4 that Commandant Naval base Guantanamo desired extend offer of help and that Key West base also undoubtedly willing to assist. ALUSNA thought offer could include medicines and serums and even services of doctors and drivers if needed. Charge immediately telephoned Chief of Protocol, Cuban Foreign Office, expressed US sympathy at tragedy, and stated that if Cuba needed any help in treatment of survivors, GUS able and willing to extend help which could be provided quickly from Naval bases at Guantanamo and/or Key West. Same offer repeated orally by Charge during call at Ministry of State March 5, morning and included in note delivered Foreign Office same afternoon. Cuban officials expressed appreciation for these offers. There have been no indications from GOC that any assistance from US is needed.

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REVIEWED BY D. ZISCHKE DATE 11/9/81

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